THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) and (b) Air India has introduced a once weekly service between Bangalore and Dubai/Muscat effective from 30th October, 1996. Indian Airlines has also introduced a twice weekly service on Bangalore - Muscat - Sharjah route effective from 2nd December, 1996.

(c) Requests are received from time to time to airlink Bangalore with important cities in the world.

(d) Air India already operates three flights a week to London/New York from Bangalore *via* Bombay and two flights a week directly from Bangalore to Singapore. Indian Airlines also plans to introduce a thrice weekly service from Bangalore to Singapore. Connections to other important distinations are provided over Bombay.

Airport at Raichur

2978. SHRI RAJA RANGAPPA NAIK : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that a Survey Team visited the Raichur airport project on February 3, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the survey report has been received by the Government; and

(d) the action proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure speedy sanctioning of airport at Raichur?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (d) Raichur Airfield belongs to the State Government of Karnataka. There is a fair weather strip and no other infrastructural facilities are available. A team of Officers surveyed the airfield and their report is being examined by the Airports Auithority of India.

Linking of Tribal Areas with State Capital by double Rail Line

2979. SHRI N.J. RATHWA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of districts in Gujarat particularly in tribal areas which are linked with the state capital by double railway line till date;

(b) the names of those districts which are not linked by rail with the state capital;

(c) whether the Government propose to link these districts by rail with the State Capital;

(d) if so, the detail thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Godhra, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat and Valsad.

(b) to (d) All districts have railway lines which are linked with the state capital.

(e) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Amount Spent on Advertisements

2980. SHRI RAM TAHAL CHAUDHARY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the announcement made by the Government regarding the new works and their inauguration is advertised on full page or half page in the newspapers;

(b) if so, the number of such advertisements given during the last six months and the amount spent thereon; and

(c) the steps being contemplated by the Government to check such wasteful expenditure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir. Publicity through the newspeper advertisement is being done depending upon the importance the works/projects for the benefit of rail users.

(b) About 73 advertisements were published in the newspapers by the Railways and an amount of Rs 2,62,68,223/- has been spent for the same by them.

(c) Railway Advertisements are normally released at DAVP rates which are comparably lower than the commercial rates of the newspapers. Such advts. in the newspapers in normally restricted to only major events/projects having national relevance and in such cases proper care is taken to restrict the number of papers so as to keep the expenditure within the available funds.

Introduction of Train Between Delhi and Abu Road

2981. SHRI PARASRAM MEGHWAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether keeping in view the importance of tourist and religious centre Mount Abu and due to the heavy rush of religious people to visit this placce, the Government propose to introduce a fast train like 'Shatabdi Express' or Inter city Express between Delhi and Abu Road;

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be introduced; and